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OSD, NAVY Reviews Completed

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DEC 12 1972

MESSAGE FOR: GENERAL SUMITRO

FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER /s/

I would be pleased to see you and Major General Hasnan Habib at a mutually convenient time. I will look into this matter further upon my return to Washington from Paris and will be communicating with you further. -----

Warmest regards.

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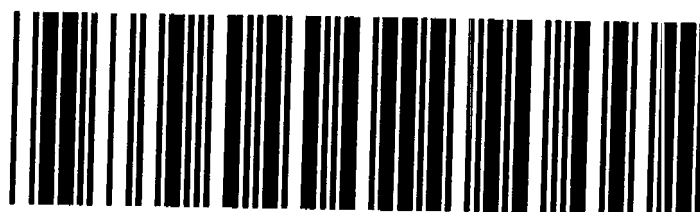
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MEMORANDUM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

INFORMATION

December 6, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Phil Odeen *PO*

SUBJECT: Brookings Paper; "The Changing Soviet Navy: and  
What the United States is Doing About It"

Henry Owen sent me an advanced copy of a forthcoming paper on the developing Soviet Navy and the U.S. response. The paper compares today's Soviet Navy with that of the latter 1950's both as to composition and mode of operation and evaluates the U.S. response to the changes.

While there are a number of things about the paper I would question, it is one of the few independent analytical assessments of the Soviet Navy and it contains a number of helpful insights.

Changes Since 1958

-- Since 1958 the Soviets have opted for qualitative improvements at the expense of force levels in submarines and major warships.

-- The Soviet attack submarine force has declined from 477 to 347; cruisers and destroyers from 177 to 130.

-- Despite the decrease in force size the Soviet Navy of 1972 is qualitatively superior to that of 1958 because it is; (1) a relatively modern force, (2) has radical new capabilities (SSBN and cruise missiles), and (3) has increased worldwide operating experience.

-- Soviet naval aviation has changed from land-based interceptor squadrons to (1) medium range bombers for anti-ship role and (2) helicopters and fixed wing aircraft for the ASW mission.

Missions of the Soviet Navy

Based on public Russian statements and documents, and observation of their training and exercises the paper concludes that the Russians perceive the major Soviet Navy missions to be:

-- Defense of Soviet homeland against sea-based weapons i. e., aircraft carriers and submarine launched ballistic missiles.

-- Provide a strategic offensive capability to strike U.S. with submarine launched ballistic missiles.

-- Naval presence missions with high political content (primarily involving underdeveloped countries) but with minimum military risks.

#### U.S. Perception of the Role of the Soviet Navy

The author argues that in addition to the missions mentioned above the U.S. Navy perceives the major Soviet missions to include: (1) interdiction of Western sea lanes, (2) projection of land and air power overseas, and (3) sustained combat at sea. However, the paper contends that the Soviet navy is incapable of the latter two missions because they have no sea-based air, support forces, or overseas bases.

With regards the interdiction of Western sea lanes the paper acknowledges that the Soviets have a large fleet of submarines and bomber aircraft but that is not sufficient evidence to prove interdiction is a major part of their plans. The large forces could be explained by the Soviet penchant for quantitative superiority and the need to maintain four separate fleets because of geography. As proof of their lack of interdiction capability he cites: declining numbers of torpedo attack subs; lack of exercises to develop shipping interdiction tactics and; Soviet plan for short war in Europe based on shock power.

#### Nature of U.S. Response to Improved Soviet Navy

-- We have chosen to ignore strategic ASW because the motivation for a Soviet nuclear first strike is reduced if their submarine launched ballistic missiles are invulnerable.

-- All U.S. response has been in our General Purpose Forces to provide protection of sea lanes and to fight a war at sea.

-- The paper concludes the U.S. Navy is overreacting to counter missions which the Soviet Navy either does not plan or is incapable of pursuing.

-- The paper questions the need for the patrol frigate and Sea Control ship programs, both designed for the "sea control mission."